

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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P R 151615Z JAN 76

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7571

INFO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 263

EXDIS

IO FOR PALMER

PASS LABOR FOR SEGALL, PERSONS AND QUACKENBUSH

E.9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ILO PORG PLO

SUBJECT: ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE IN ILO

REF: PALMER-ABRAMS TELCON JAN 9, 75 GENEVA 9543, 75 GENEVA 9360

1. SUMMARY. ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD IS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT HIS REPORT IN MARCH TO GOVERNING BODY (GB) ON FOLLOWUP TO 1974 CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON CONDITIONS OF ARAB WORKERS IN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WILL WINDUP GB CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM.

HOWEVER, BLANCHARD RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT EXTREMISTS AMONG ARABS MIGHT TRY STRONGER RESOLUTION--POSSIBILITY CALLING FOR EXPULSION OF ISRAEL--AT ANNUAL ILO CONFERENCE IN JUNE. END SUMMARY.

2. BLANCHARD TOLD LABATT HE WILL DISTRIBUTE HIS REPORT TO GOVERNING BODY SOME TIME AFTER FEB. 20, NOT EARLY BUT NOT LATE ENOUGH TO PROVOKE CRITICISM FOR "POLITICAL FOOTDRAGGING" (GB PLENARY SESSION TAKES PLACE MAR. 2-5). REPORT WILL BE

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BULKY AND INCLUDE CONSIDERABLE QUANTITY OF INFORMATION SUPPLIED

BY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AND HISTADRUT. BLANCHARD AND SENIOR STAFF HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IN GENEVA AND WITH ISRAELI FOREIGN OFFICE. LATTER HAS SUPPLIED GENERAL REPLY TO ALLEGATIONS MADE IN MARCH 1975 GOVERNING BODY SESSION BY LEBANESE EMPLOYER MEMBER OF GB (NASR) BUT BLANCHARD HAS ASKED FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION LEST (1) OVERLY VAGUE REPLY TEMPT NASR TO RENEW HIS INQUIRIES AND (2) ISRAELIS BE VULNERABLE TO CHARGES OF INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THEIR LAW AND PRACTICE. GOI NOW CONSIDERING MORE DETAILED REPLY. BLANCHARD IS HOPEFUL THAT ISRAELI REPLY IN PARTICULAR AND HIS ENTIRE REPORT WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY DETAILED TO BE ACCEPTED BY ARABS AND GB AS "FINAL CHAPTER". IF ARABS ACCEPT HIS REPORT AS HE BELIEVES THEY WILL, BLANCHARD EXPECTS MILD DECISION BY GOVERNING BODY, I.E., NOTING REPORT AND ASKING THAT HE CONTINUE TO KEEP ABREAST OF SITUATION. (BLANCHARD SAID THAT HIS REPORT ALSO WILL INCLUDE INFORMATION FROM "PALESTINE LABOR ORGANIZATION" (AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO THE CONFEDERATION OF PALESTINIAN TRADE UNIONS) AND ADDED THAT HE HAD REJECTED ARAB SUGGESTIONS TO ASK PLO FOR CONTRIBUTION.

3. BLANCHARD'S BELIEF THAT ARABS LIKELY TO ACCEPT HIS REPORT BASED ON CONVERSATION IN LOME (PARA 2, GENEVA 9543) WITH MODERATE ARAB MEMBERS OF GOVERNING BODY (AHMED OF SUDAN AND HAKHLOUF AND ZALILA OF TUNISIA). BLANCHARD SAID "THE DEAL" THEY OFFERED WAS BY BURY ISSUE IF HE GAVE A "FULL REPORT." HE BELIEVES HIS REPORT WILL MEET THIS CRITERION BECAUSE IT WILL INCLUSE MATERIALS FROM GOI, HISTADRUT, INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS (ICATU), ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION (ALO), "PALESTINE LABOR ORGANIZATION" AND REPLIES TO QUESTIONS POSED IN GB LAST MARCH BY MASR.

4. LABATT NOTED BLANCHARD LEANING HEAVILY ON WORD OF MODERATE ARABS AND WONDERED HOW MORE EXTREME ARABS WOULD REACT. BLANCHARD COULD NOT BE SURE BUT HAD IMPRESSION CHANCES WERE GOOD ALL ARABS WOULD GO ALONG AT MARCH GB SESSION. HOWEVER, HE HAS HEARD THAT LADHIRI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION (ALO), WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS A "RADICAL ALGERIAN" WOULD TRY TO DRUM UP SUPPORT FOR NEW AND STRONG RESOLUTION--PERHAPS CALLING FOR EXPULSION OF ISRAEL--AT ILO ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN JUNE. LADHIRI REPORTEDLY WILL ATTEMPT

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TO GET AGREEMENT ON SPONSORSHIP AND CONTENT OF RESOLUTION DURING MARCH MEETINGS OF ALO AT NOUAKCHOTT AND AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN FREETOWN.

5. COMMENT. RECEPTION OF BLANCHARD'S REPORT BY GOVERNING BODY WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON TWO FACTORS: (1) CONTENT OF GOI REPLY WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED; AND (2) WILLINGNESS OF ARAB MEMBERS OF GB TO AGREE TO A SCENARIO. ALTHOUGH

BLANCHARD WORKING ON ARAB MODERATES AND HAS FAIR CHANCE OF SUCCESS, WE DO NOT FEEL HE IS ANYWHERE NEAR HOME AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, AS LONG AS GB KEEPS MATTER ON ITS AGENDA AND DOES NOT LET IT GO TO THE ILO CONFERENCE, WE FEEL THE PROBLEM IS MANAGABLE.

6. OF GREATER URGENCY IS BLANCHARD'S WARNING OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW ARAB RESOLUTION AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN JUNE. HE RIGHTLY FEELS THAT EVENTS IN NOUAKCHOTT AND FREETOWN BEAR CLOSE WATCHING. HE ALSO INTIMATED THAT HE IS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH IRVING BROWN. FROM USG POINT OF VIEW, MISSION BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT THAT CABINET LEVEL COMMITTEE (CLC) ARTICULATE NEW US POLICY TOWARD ILO (REF C) IN TIME TO MAKE IMPACT ON (1) ILO MEMBER COUNTRIES BEFORE GOVERNING BODY MEETS (FEB 18 - MAR 5) AND (2) ON PARTICIPANTS IN MEETINGS IN NOUAKCHOTT AND FREETOWN. IN LATTER CONTEXT, SHOULD CLC DECIDE ON AMBASSADORIAL-LEVEL BRIEFINGS FOR KEY MEMBERS OF ILO, WASHINGTON MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER EXPANDING LISTS OF LDC'S IN PARA 5 OF GENEVA 9360
ABRAMS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, POLICIES, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GENEVA00263
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760015-0857
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760155/aaaabwnn.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 GENEVA 9543, 76 GENEVA 9360
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 FEB 2004 by morefir>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE IN ILO
TAGS: PORG, IS, XF, US, ILO, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006